

**Analysis of *Customer Service Surveys*
distributed in *Putting Children First* (Issue 11)
September – October 2004**

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) recently conducted an analysis of perceptions of customer service received by NCAC customers through a *Customer Service Survey*, distributed with the September 2004 issue of *Putting Children First*.

NCAC received over 1000 responses from September 2004 to October 2005, with participants ranging from long day care centres, family day care schemes, outside school hours care services, Validators, Moderators, educators, and other child care professionals.

Based on the findings of this report, NCAC aims to improve several aspects of its customer service, including:

- ensuring NCAC staff availability to take customers' telephone calls
- ensuring all information provided by NCAC staff is clear, accurate and helpful
- clarification of the role of the Validator as an NCAC representative
- providing more information on the function of the *Validation Evaluation Form* and NCAC's response
- providing more information on NCAC's feedback processes

The report that follows summarises the responses collected from the *Customer Service Surveys* and indicates that the majority of responses were positive regarding the level of customer service received from NCAC staff.

* Please note all figures in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole percent

Part A – NCAC’s Telephone Customer Service

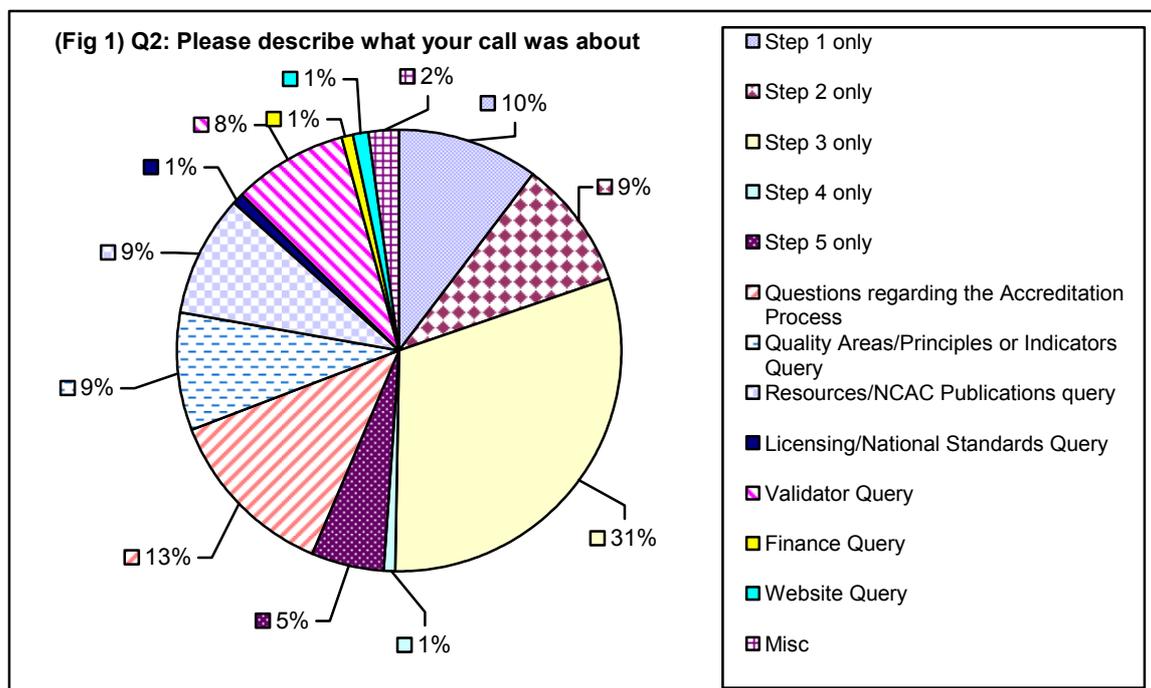
Information collected on the *Customer Service Surveys* indicates that the majority of NCAC customers were happy with the level of customer service they received through telephone contact with NCAC.

Telephone Contact

Respondents were asked several questions about their last telephone call with an NCAC staff member, with 65% of responses indicating that they were happy with the level of customer service provided.

- 80% of respondents had contacted NCAC within the last 12 months (48% within the last 3 months – August-October), 3% had not telephoned NCAC in over 2 years and 4% had never contacted NCAC
- 91% of respondents felt that their telephone call had been answered promptly and courteously, 4% disagreed
- 88% of respondents felt that their call was quickly transferred to the appropriate person, 6% disagreed
- Of those respondents who provided additional comments regarding the way their call was answered, 58% were positive regarding the level of customer service received, 6% were not

As indicated in Figure 1, the majority of calls to NCAC related to Step 3: Validation, and included queries regarding the Validator, extensions of time on the date of the Validation Visit and queries regarding the submission of Validation Surveys. 11% of respondents contacted NCAC in relation to the Accreditation process, equal numbers of respondents called regarding Step 1: Registration and Step 2: Self-study and Continuous Improvement. 1% of callers contacted NCAC regarding licensing/national standards, for example, staff qualifications and staff:children ratios, these callers were directed on to the appropriate licensing authority in their State/Territory.



Quality of the NCAC's Customer Service

As NCAC's primary point of contact with customers is through the telephone, NCAC is committed to providing quality customer service at all times. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the quality of customer service they had received.

- Over 95% of respondents agreed that the NCAC staff member was courteous and professional, 3% disagreed
- Over 85% of respondents agreed that the NCAC staff member quickly identified their query and were attentive to their needs, 4% disagreed
- Over 84% of respondents agreed that the NCAC staff member was knowledgeable and helped the respondent to reach a solution to their concern or query, 7% disagreed
- 84% of respondents were satisfied with the way their questions were answered, 9% were not
- Of those respondents who were unhappy with the way their telephone call was answered, 12% found that the staff member who first answered their call was unable to answer their query and 14% found that the staff member had to ask others

Additional comments:

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding the way their telephone call was answered, of the 106 comments, 58% of respondents provided positive feedback regarding the level of customer service received. 10% were positive regarding the return of service calls and 8% positive regarding staff knowledge. However 7% of comments were unhappy with the availability of NCAC staff to take their call.

Examples of comments made by respondents in relation to this question include:

- *They 'smile down the phone'*
- *The staff I have rung have always been very helpful, often putting my worries at ease. An excellent service*
- *I was very pleased with the questions being answered promptly and felt reassured*
- *Very direct - not friendly, sounded like she was in a hurry*
- *When the person I wanted wasn't there they asked me what it was about and transferred me to someone who could help me (very helpful)*
- *The person who answered my call was very polite and friendly - lovely telephone manner*
- *Staff are rarely at their desks when phoning so usually needed to leave a voicemail message*
- *NCAC support staff have always been very helpful and willing to spend any amount of time in answering questions and giving detailed explanations*
- *Each time I have contacted NCAC I have encountered nothing but a courteous, professional manner*
- *It was highly professional, quick and I got all the information I needed*
- *I have always found the responses to be quick and professional, with 'front desk' sourcing relevant people immediately. Calls have usually been returned on the same day*
- *Although several people became involved in answering my questions, each person listened, undertook some action & followed up to a satisfactory conclusion*
- *The person I first spoke to had no idea and really didn't seem to care if my question was answered*
- *I've only had one phone call that I was unhappy with; all other correspondence has been fine. Staff have been friendly, helpful and listened to my needs*

Part B: NCAC's Written Correspondence

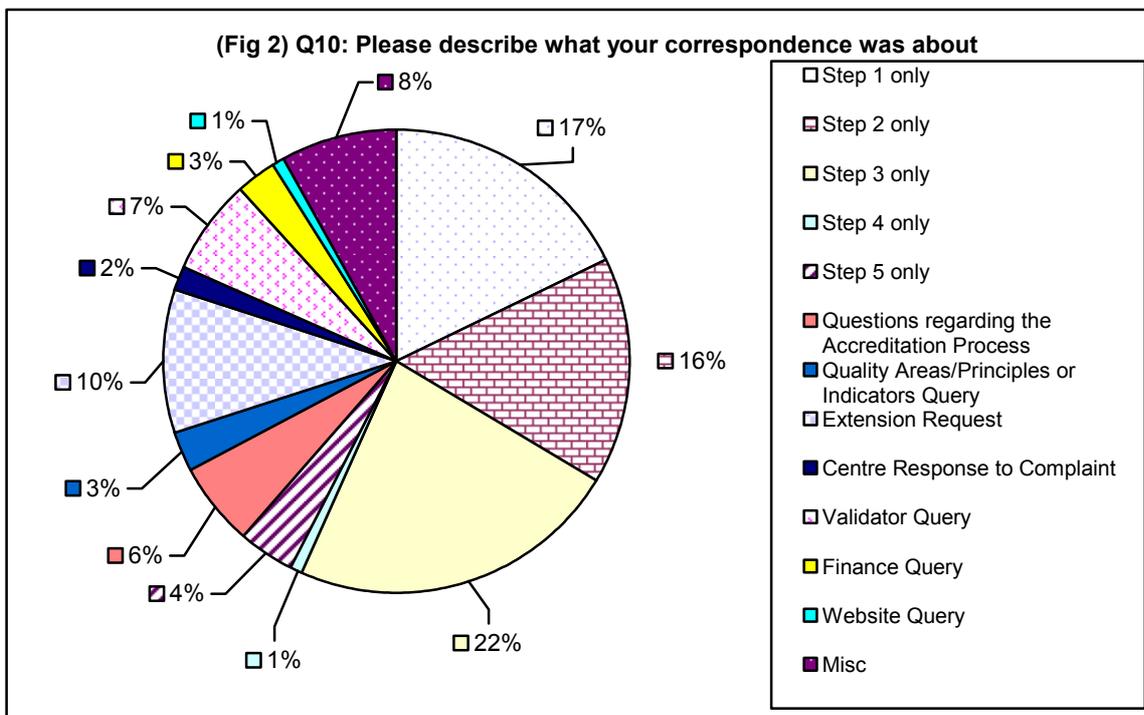
Respondents completing this section of the *Customer Service Survey* were generally positive regarding NCAC's response to any written communication.

Written contact

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their most recent correspondence with NCAC, which included e-mails, facsimiles and letters, with 73% of respondents satisfied with NCAC's response to their correspondence.

- 63% of respondents had written to NCAC within the last 12 months (34% within the last 3 months – August-October), 15% had not written to NCAC in over a year, and 17% had never written to NCAC
- 45% of respondents received a response within 10 working days, 19% waited more than 10 working days for a response, and 14% did not require a response

As indicated in Figure 2, the majority of respondents wrote to NCAC regarding Step 3: Validation, and included written concerns regarding the Validation Visit. 18% of correspondence was in regards to Step 1: Registration, 16% was in regards to Step 2: Self-study and Continuing Improvement, 10% of respondents wrote to NCAC requesting extensions of time on the service's *Self-study Report* or Validation Visit.



Quality of the NCAC's Written Customer Service

As part of NCAC's own quality assurance process, NCAC aims to ensure that all written correspondence is receipted and responded to within 10 working days. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to NCAC written correspondence.

- 69% of respondents felt that their concerns were acknowledged in NCAC's correspondence, 9% disagreed
- Over 70% of respondents felt that NCAC's correspondence answered their queries courteously and with respect for their needs, 8% of respondents disagreed
- 78% of respondents felt that NCAC's response was written professionally, 6% disagreed
- 73% of respondents were satisfied with NCAC's response, 13% were not
- Of those respondents who provided additional comments regarding the way their correspondence was handled, 9% were positive regarding NCAC's response, 35% were not

Additional comments:

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding the way their correspondence was handled, of the 58 comments, 21% of respondents provided positive feedback regarding NCAC's response; however 19% were unhappy with the timeliness of NCAC's response.

Of those respondents who were unhappy with the timeliness of NCAC's response, some indicated that NCAC had not responded to comments made in their service's *Validation Evaluation Form*, however it is not NCAC policy to provide written confirmation of *Validation Evaluation Forms*, these are all immediately forwarded to Step 4: Moderation, and where appropriate are also used for Validator and NCAC feedback.

Examples of comments made by respondents in relation to this question include:

- *Sent fax so didn't need to respond. When I rang with the question they were great.*
- *I was assured my response had been received and would be forwarded to the Moderator*
- *Satisfied and happy so far*
- *I have never been unhappy with NCAC responses (written OR verbal)*
- *NCAC rang me with response*
- *I prefer direct contact - if you write and don't hear back quickly it is easy to forget to follow-up. If you are waiting for answer you need it as soon as possible.*
- *I did not need correspondence back but the matter was handled fast and easily in co-ordination with the Validator.*
- *It was a typical reply, did not refer specifically to my correspondence. It just acknowledged that they had received it*
- *No response was required; website listing was corrected with 5 working days-very satisfied*
- *Verbal (telephone) response to written communication was more helpful than written response - contained reasons/suggestions*
- *Very impressed with the prompt response*
- *E-mail was quick and time efficient*
- *Although we had some specific issues arising from our Validation Visit these were not acknowledged or addressed by NCAC*

PART C: NCAC's Overall Customer Service

Respondents were asked a series of general questions regarding the quality of customer service provided through telephone contact, written correspondence and by NCAC staff.

Telephone Contact:

- 85% of respondents were satisfied with the amount of time spent waiting or on hold during telephone calls, less than 3% were dissatisfied
- 92% of respondents were satisfied with the behaviour of the NCAC staff member taking the telephone call, 1% of customers were not
- 92% of respondents felt that NCAC telephone call to their service were carried out in a professional and effective manner, 0.6% disagreed

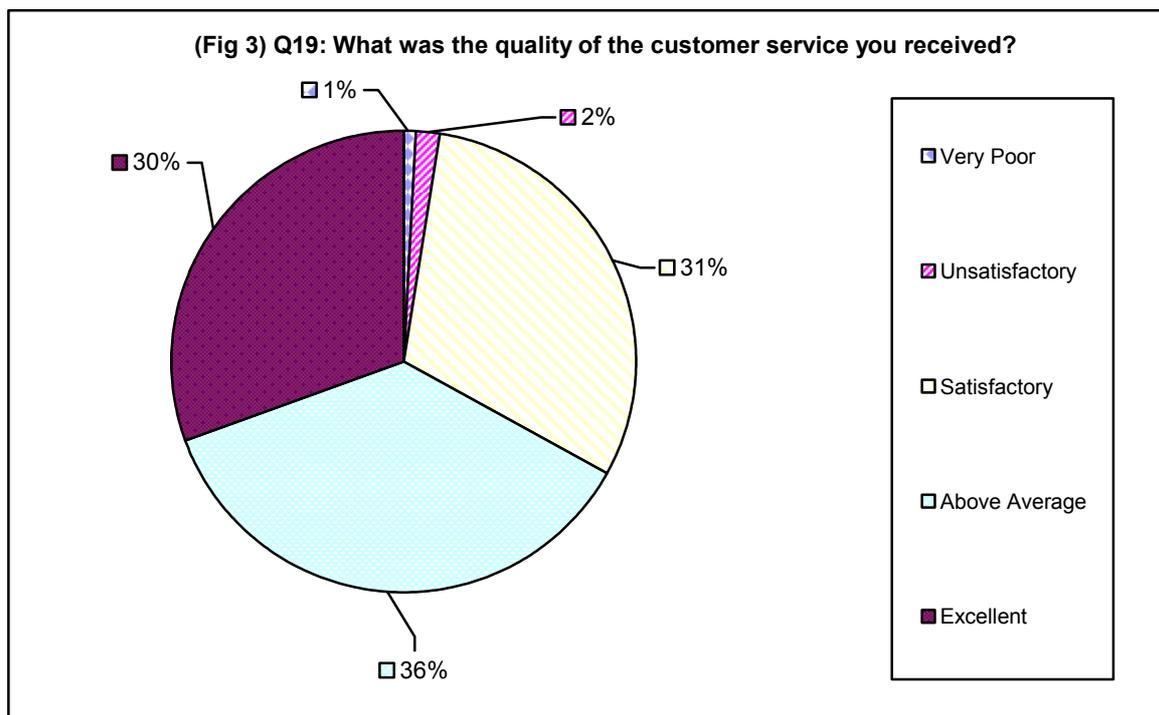
Written Contact

- 74% of respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of NCAC's written correspondence, 5% were dissatisfied
- 80% of respondents were satisfied with the accuracy/helpfulness of written information and documentation provided by NCAC, 3% were not
- 81% of respondents found NCAC's correspondence to be professional, 4% disagreed

NCAC Staff

- 92% of respondents were satisfied with the attitude and helpfulness of NCAC staff, 2% of respondents were dissatisfied
- 92% of respondents were satisfied with the professional competence of NCAC staff, 1% were not
- 85% of respondents were satisfied with the NCAC staff member's ability to suggest additional information, services and organisations useful to their needs, 3% were dissatisfied
- 86% of respondents were satisfied with the NCAC staff member's ability to handle and resolve their concerns, 5% were not
- 90% of respondents were satisfied with the NCAC staff member's subject knowledge, 3% disagreed
- 86% of respondents saw NCAC as a customer service focussed organisation, 3% did not
- 65% of respondents believed that NCAC is meeting those goals and objectives stated in NCAC's *Customer Service Charter*, 2% disagreed

As shown in Figure 3, when asked to think about their overall customer service experience with NCAC, the majority of respondents felt that NCAC's customer service was Above Average, with similar numbers stating that NCAC's customer service was Satisfactory or Excellent.



Part D: Questions about You

This section of the *Customer Service Survey* was optional, and aimed to gather general evidence about respondents.

- 92% of respondents were children's service providers
- 10% of respondents were from family day care, 66% from long day care and 22% were from outside school hours care
- 40% of respondents contacted NCAC infrequently, 22% contacted NCAC when required, 22% contacted NCAC more than 4 times per year, 14% contacted NCAC 2-3 times per year and 2% of respondents had never contacted NCAC
- 77% of respondents tended to contact NCAC by telephone, 14% by post and 8% by e-mail